IN THE CLAIMS:

A complete listing of the claims is set forth below. Please amend the claims as follows:

1. **(Canceled)**

2. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 13, wherein:

the network API request and network API reply components comprise Multi-purpose Internet Mail Extension (MIME) containers communicated over the Internet in HTTPS messages.

3. **(Currently Amended)** The system of Claim 13, wherein the <u>one or more clients comprise</u> ~~client comprises~~ at least one of a remote application, a remote spoke, and a remote hub system.

4. **(Currently Amended)** The system of Claim 13, wherein the request broker is a component of an electronic marketplace, the <u>one or more clients are</u> ~~client is~~ remote from the electronic marketplace, and the <u>one or more clients comprise</u> ~~client comprises~~ at least one of a remote enterprise application, a remote spoke, and a remote electronic marketplace.

5. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 13, wherein:

the plurality of acceptable native formats comprises Extensible Markup Language (XML), Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), and serialized object formats; and

the internal format comprises serialized object format, the parameters being converted into serialized object classes by the selected translator.

6.   **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 13, wherein the system API method is called using a synchronous method invocation semantic.

7.   **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 13, wherein the application server system comprises an application server and a plurality of associated adapters, the request broker communicating the parameters in the internal format to a selected one of the plurality of adapters to enable execution of the system API method according to the parameters, the selected adapter being operable to:

receive the parameters from the request broker in the internal format;

communicate the parameters to the application server in the internal format for execution of the system API method according to the parameters;

receive the return value from the application server reflecting execution of the system API method according to the parameters; and

communicate the return value to the request broker in the internal format.

8.   **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 13, wherein the application server system supports one or more applications comprising at least a collaborative planning application operable to provide planning data for one or more clients within a supply chain.

9.   **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 13, wherein the network API request component and network API reply component each comprise a version identifier indicating the version of the network API request component and network API reply component being used.

10.   **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 13, wherein the network API reply comprises a format field describing how to interpret the return value and corresponding to the selected translator.

11.　**(Currently Amended)** The system of Claim 13, wherein the network API reply comprises a deprecation notice indicating to the <u>one or more clients</u> ~~client~~ that the system API method that was called should not be further used.

12.　**(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 13, wherein the request broker is further operable to generate a network API exception component based on an exception occurring in connection with execution of a second system API method called based on a network API request component received from a second client, the network API exception component comprising a description of the second system API method, a description of the exception, and a deprecation notice indicating to the second client that the second system API method should not be further used.

13.   **(Currently Amended)** A computer-implemented ~~system,~~ <u>system for</u> <u>facilitating communication in a distributed network environment, the system</u> comprising:

a request broker, implemented as a servlet operating at a Secure Hypertext Transport Protocol (HTTPS) web server within a hub system, operable to:

receive a network application program interface (API) request component from ~~a client,~~ <u>one or more clients within the distributed network environment, the one or</u> <u>more clients</u> located remote from the hub system, the network API request component comprising a description of a system API method to be called and one or more parameters to be used in executing the system API method, the parameters having one of a plurality of acceptable native formats;

determine the native format of the parameters;

communicate the parameters in the native format to a selected one of a plurality of translators for translation of the parameters from the native format to an internal format, each translator being associated with a different native format; and

communicate the parameters in the internal format to an application server to enable execution of the system API method according to the parameters; and

the application server system, operable to receive the parameters from the request broker in the internal format, generate a return value reflecting execution of the system API method according to the parameters, and communicate the return value to the request broker in the internal format;

the request broker further operable to receive the return value from the application server system in the internal format, communicate the return value in the internal format to the selected translator for translation of the return value from the internal format to the native format, generate a network API reply component that comprises the description of the system API method that was called and the return value in the native format, and communicate the network API reply component to the ~~client;~~ <u>one or more clients;</u> and

a system firewall having a plurality of ports, the system maintaining at least one port of the system firewall open for communication with the <u>one or more clients,</u> ~~client,~~

the one or more clients client initiating a connection to the system through the at least one open port of the system firewall to communicate the network API request component to the request broker, independent of any port of a client firewall being open for communication with the system.

14.   **(Canceled)**

15.   **(Previously Presented)** The method of Claim 26, wherein:

the network API request and network API reply components comprise Multi-purpose Internet Mail Extension (MIME) containers communicated over the Internet in HTTPS messages.

16.   **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim ~~14,~~ 26, wherein the one or more clients comprise ~~client comprises~~ at least one of a remote application, a remote spoke, and a remote hub system.

17.   **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim ~~14,~~ 26, wherein the request broker is a component of an electronic marketplace, the one or more clients are ~~client is~~ remote from the electronic marketplace, and the one or more clients comprise ~~client comprises~~ at least one of a remote enterprise application, a remote spoke, and a remote electronic marketplace.

18.   **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim ~~14,~~ 26, wherein:

the plurality of acceptable native formats comprises Extensible Markup Language (XML), Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), and serialized object formats; and

the internal format comprises serialized object format, the parameters being converted into serialized object classes by the selected translator.

19.   **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim ~~14,~~ 26, further comprising calling the system API method using a synchronous method invocation semantic.

20.   **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim ~~14,~~ 26, wherein:

the application server system comprises an application server and a plurality of associated adapters; and

the method comprises communicating the parameters in the internal format from the request broker to a selected one of the plurality of adapters to enable execution of the system API method according to the parameters, communicating the parameters from the selected adapter to the application server in the internal format for execution of the system API method according to the parameters, receiving at the selected adapter the return value from the application server reflecting execution of the system API method according to the parameters, and communicating the return value from the selected adapter to the request broker in the internal format.

21.   **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim ~~14,~~ 26, wherein the application server system supports one or more applications comprising at least a collaborative planning application operable to provide planning data for one or more clients within a supply chain.

22.   **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim ~~14,~~ 26, wherein the network API request component and network API reply component each comprise a version identifier indicating the version of the network API request component and network API reply component being used.

23.   **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim ~~14,~~ 26, wherein the network API reply comprises a format field describing how to interpret the return value and corresponding to the selected translator.

24.   **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim ~~14,~~ 26, wherein the network API reply comprises a deprecation notice indicating to the <u>one or more clients</u> ~~client~~ that the system API method that was called should not be further used.

25.   **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim ~~14,~~ 26, further comprising generating a network API exception component at the request broker based on an exception that has occurred in connection with execution of a second system API method called based on a network API request component received from a second client, the network API exception component comprising a description of the second system API method, a description of the exception, and a deprecation notice indicating to the second client that the second system API method should not be further used.

26. **(Currently Amended)** A computer-implemented ~~method,~~ method for facilitating communication in a distributed network environment, the method comprising:

receiving a network application program interface (API) request component at a request broker implemented as a servlet operating at a Secure Hypertext Transport Protocol (HTTPS) web server within a hub system from ~~a client,~~ one or more clients within the distributed network environment, the one or more clients located remote from the hub system, the network API request component comprising a description of a system API method to be called and one or more parameters to be used in executing the system API method, the parameters having one of a plurality of acceptable native formats;

determining the native format of the parameters at the request broker;

communicating the parameters in the native format from the request broker to a selected one of a plurality of translators for translation of the parameters from the native format to an internal format, each translator being associated with a different native format;

communicating the parameters in the internal format from the request broker to an application server system to enable execution of the system API method according to the parameters;

receiving a return value at the request broker from the application server system in the internal format;

communicating the return value from the request broker to the selected translator for translation of the return value from the internal format to the native format;

generating a network API reply component at the request broker comprising the description of the system API method that was called and the return value in the native format;

communicating the network API reply component from the request broker to the ~~client,~~ one or more clients;

maintaining at least one of a plurality of ports of a system firewall open for communication with the ~~client,~~ one or more clients; and

accepting a connection initiated by the <u>one or more clients</u> ~~client~~ through the at least one open port of the system firewall to allow the <u>one or more clients</u> ~~client~~ to communicate the network API request component to the request broker, independent of any port of a client firewall being open for communication.

27. **(Currently Amended)** A computer-implemented ~~system,~~ system for facilitating communication in a distributed network environment, the system comprising:

means for receiving a network application program interface (API) request component at a request broker implemented as a servlet operating at a Secure Hypertext Transport Protocol (HTTPS) web server within a hub system from ~~a client,~~ one or more clients within the distributed network environment, the one or more clients located remote from the hub system, the network API request component comprising a description of a system API method to be called and one or more parameters to be used in executing the system API method, the parameters having one of a plurality of acceptable native formats;

means for determining the native format of the parameters at the request broker;

means for communicating the parameters in the native format from the request broker to a selected one of a plurality of translators for translation of the parameters from the native format to an internal format, each translator being associated with a different native format;

means for communicating the parameters in the internal format from the request broker to an application server system to enable execution of the system API method according to the parameters;

means for receiving a return value from the application server system at the request broker reflecting execution of the system API method according to the parameters;

means for communicating the return value in the internal format from the request broker to the selected translator for translation of the return value from the internal format to the native format;

means for generating a network API reply component at the request broker comprising the description of the system API method that was called and the return value in the native format; ~~and~~

means for communicating the network API reply component from the request broker to the ~~client;~~ one or more clients;

means for maintaining at least one of a plurality of ports of a system firewall open for communication with the ~~client;~~ <u>one or more clients;</u> and

means for accepting a connection initiated by the <u>one or more clients</u> ~~client~~ through the at least one open port of the system firewall to allow the <u>one or more clients</u> ~~client~~ to communicate the network API request component to the request broker, independent of any port of a client firewall being open for communication.